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REMARKS BY

U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA THE 236TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICA'S INDEPENDENCE A CELEBRATION U.S. EMBASSY, DHAKA MAY 30, 2012

Welcome, welcome, everyone ...

... especially the Honorable Foreign Minister Dipu Moni ...

... and all our many distinguished guests, friends, colleagues ...

Independence, freedom, democracy ...

Common words, simple words ...

... but complex concepts.

Independence, freedom, democracy ...

Rarely are these gifts ...

In America, as in Bangladesh and in so many other countries around the world, we had to fight for independence, freedom, democracy ...

236 years ago in Philadelphia in the then colony of Pennsylvania, a group of British subjects assembled and did the unthinkable, the unimaginable, the impossible ...

... they declared independence; they declared their freedom. These brave or, perhaps, foolhardy, farmers, plantation owners, traders, blacksmiths, teachers declared war on the mightiest, most powerful military force the world had ever seen ... and they pledged their property, their lives, their honor in the pursuit of freedom.

War raged for seven years ... sweat, pain, hardship, blood, suffering, sacrifice abounded.

The ending of this story you all know ... with the help of our friends, most especially the French, the freedom fighters prevailed and America was born.

Then came the hard part ... to forge a nation from heretofore disparate colonies ... to put the greater good, the public good first, above selfish, parochial interests ... to create a nation founded on new ideas, new concepts, governance based on the consent of the governed, respect for the rights of the individual ...

These were raw, untested ideas and theories... and the process of putting them into action was difficult and painful ... the first attempt failed miserably ... but eventually a constitution was crafted that has worked for us for over 200 years ... but America's experiment with building democracy is an ongoing process as we seek to perfect our system of governance ... I suspect we will never complete the task.

I see so many parallels between America's struggle for independence and our continuing quest to strengthen democracy and the Bangladesh experience, as Bangladesh, too, had to fight against the odds for freedom and Bangladesh, too, is working hard to strengthen its democracy.

As Secretary Clinton said during her historic visit to Bangladesh earlier this month, America is Bangladesh's friend and partner. We stand resolutely with Bangladesh and commit ourselves to partner with Bangladesh to promote a Bangladesh that is peaceful, secure, prosperous, healthy and democratic. I commit myself and the mission I lead to do everything we can to help Bangladesh to this end, as I believe such a Bangladesh is in the interests of the people of the region, of America, and, most importantly, of Bangladesh.

Again, welcome to our celebration of independence, freedom, democracy.

Thank you.

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GR/2012